

Department of Social Services  
71 Athllon Drive  
Greenway ACT 2900

Ref D18/684827

**RE: NSW Carers Advisory Council submission on the Integrated Carer Support Service: Regional Delivery Model**

Please find attached a copy of a submission on the Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS): Regional Delivery Model on behalf of the members of the NSW Carers Advisory Council.

The Carers Advisory Council has reviewed the Department of Social Services discussion paper entitled *ICSS: Regional Delivery Partners: A draft regional delivery model* and is pleased to provide the following submission.

The Council's submission is in two parts; part one outlines the Council's position on the proposed Regional Delivery Model while part two provides detail on where the Council believes more information is required in order for it to provide more detailed feedback.

The Council would like to thank the Department of Social Services for the opportunity to provide feedback on this important program for carers across Australia.

Yours sincerely

Prue Warrilow  
Chair  
**NSW Carers Advisory Council**

# **NSW Carers Advisory Council submission on the Integrated Carer Support Service: Regional Delivery Model**

## **About the NSW Carers Advisory Council**

The Carers Advisory Council is established under the NSW *Carers (Recognition) Act 2010* to advance the interests of carers. It provides advice to the NSW Minister for Disability Services on legislation, policy and other matters relating to carers. The majority of Council members are carers. More information is available online at:

[www.facs.nsw.gov.au/reforms/carers/nsw\\_carers\\_advisory\\_council](http://www.facs.nsw.gov.au/reforms/carers/nsw_carers_advisory_council)

## **1. Council's position on the proposed Integrated Carer Support Service (ICSS): Regional Delivery Model**

### **High risk associated with a national rollout without a pilot program and evaluation**

The Council believes that there are inherent and unacceptable risks associated with a national rollout of the ICSS without first piloting and evaluating the program across a smaller area. The consequences of a flawed rollout would be dire for carers across the country, in particular those in rural and remote areas. The consequences are further compounded by the cessation of existing services just three months after the national rollout.

The Council recommends that a pilot Regional Delivery Provider (RDP) service area be rolled out prior to the national rollout. Alongside this pilot should be a well resourced evaluation program that can suggest strategies for improvement of service delivery and performance. Once this RDP service area's evaluation has been completed a phased rollout of the remaining RDP service areas should be considered.

### **Service provision to rural and remote regions under the Regional Delivery Model**

The Council has serious concerns for the provision of carer services in rural and remote areas given the discussion paper's conclusion on page 8 that:

*"A smaller number of larger contracts (RDP service areas) ensures a more equitable access and consistent service experience across regions".*

While some existing small service providers may enter into consortium arrangements with their local RDPs, the Regional Delivery Model fails to detail how existing service provision gaps, predominantly in rural and remote areas, will be addressed.

With funding to non-RDP organisations due to cease in November 2019 the Council is concerned that smaller services, eg the CRC Network, Carer Information Service and Carer Counselling, will be left with no possibility of accessing ongoing Government funding. Those providers who have not negotiated a role for their organisation in their RDP service area may be forced to close their doors to carers. The associated loss of intellectual property and local knowledge is, in the Council's opinion, an unacceptable consequence of this reform.

### **Concept of integrated support is not supported by the structure of the model**

The Council supports the concept of integrated carer support however the proposed delivery model for carer support appears to distance the carer from the service.

### **Priorities of the Integrated Plan for Carer Support Services – Stage Two**

The Council would like to express their support for a greater emphasis on carer-directed support services. Many experienced carers value hands-on practical support, such as cleaning, shopping and gardening, over coaching and counselling services which are

typically more helpful to new carers and carers experiencing a crisis. The practical support provided needs to be ongoing so that carers can continue in their caring role.

The Council agrees that prioritising carers “*most in need of support*” is a good goal. However the absence of any mention of preventative health measures for carers is an oversight. Preventative programs that include social and physical wellbeing initiatives would be a welcome addition to the ICSS priorities.

The Council is concerned that there are a limited number of large organisations that would be appropriate to anchor RDP service areas. Small local services may be in a better position to offer ongoing support to carers.

## **2. More information is required in order for Council to provide considered feedback on the proposed Regional Delivery Model**

In order to provide a more considered response to the Regional Delivery Model the NSW Carers Advisory Council would like to request more information from Department of Social Services (DSS), specifically:

### **Evidence Base for the Regional Delivery Model and RDP service areas**

Council would like more information on how DSS designed the RDP service areas (data sources used).

What analysis has DSS conducted into the needs of carers across different regions of Australia? Is the funding allocated to the ICSS Regional Delivery Model evidence-based?

The Council would like to be provided with the evidence base that supports the use of larger service providers over smaller local service providers. Does this evidence suggest that larger providers can deliver a better service to carers?

### **Guaranteed service level provision**

Given the RDP service areas have been designed with rural-metro service provision and cost offsetting in mind, will DSS insist on minimum service level provisions across each RDP service area?

To discuss this further, please contact Prue Warrilow, Chair, NSW Carers Advisory Council on 0408 020 904 or email the Council at [NSWCarersAdvisoryCouncil@fac.s.nsw.gov.au](mailto:NSWCarersAdvisoryCouncil@fac.s.nsw.gov.au) .